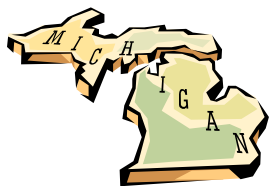




Boating & Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



Michigan is the Great Lakes State! With over 1,300 square miles of inland water and 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline – the many sparkling lakes and rivers mean there is the chance for a lot of outdoor fun including fishing, boating and water sports.

Unfortunately, all of that fun can also bring risk. While there are laws meant to keep you and the environment safe when you're on the water, the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning are often overlooked.

What Is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (also known as CO) is an invisible gas that can be deadly to humans and pets, even in small amounts. You can't smell it, taste it or see it. You may be exposed without knowing, which is why carbon monoxide is sometimes called "the silent killer."

Carbon monoxide is found in many places including exhaust from cars and boats. Boat exhaust is very dangerous: ONE BOAT engine could produce as much carbon monoxide as 180 CARS! When you breathe in carbon monoxide, you don't get enough oxygen into your body. You can quickly become confused or pass out. If you're in the water, you could drown. There have been hundreds of deaths in the United States that were due to drowning because of carbon monoxide poisoning.



What you can do:



- **NEVER** swim directly behind a motorboat or under a pontoon boat. High levels of carbon monoxide can stay around in those areas even after the engine is turned off. You, your friends or children could pass out and drown.
- **AVOID** idling for long periods of time. This is dangerous at anytime, but especially when the wind is coming from behind the boat.
- **BE CAREFUL** of "backdrafting" when traveling with a high bow angle. Backdrafting causes carbon monoxide to be blown back into the boat. The carbon monoxide gas can build up to dangerous levels quickly, even if the boat is completely open. Make sure your boat is well trimmed and the bow isn't too high in the air. Your owner's manual will have instructions on how to properly do this.
- **DON'T ASSUME** that you are "sea sick," especially if more than one person has a headache, is dizzy, confused, very tired and/or sick to their stomach. All are common symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure.



DO NOT ignore symptoms. You could DIE within minutes if you do nothing. Call 911 or go the nearest emergency room as quickly as possible if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.

For more information:

Michigan Department of Community Health, 1-800-648-6942

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic>

Boat U.S. Foundation

http://www.boatus.org/onlinecourse/course_re-write/carbonmonoxide.html

U.S. Coast Guard

<http://uscgboating.org/command/co.htm>

California Department of Boating and Waterways

<http://www.dbw.ca.gov/BoaterInfo/CODanger.aspx>